

Similarly, regular netting of selected areas cannot fail to bring to light an enormous amount of interesting material. As the value of banding lies in the retrapping, this appears to be the means by which the greatest number of retraps can be achieved by mist netting.

The final analysis and publication of much of the information would appear to be a matter for the individual rather than for C.S.I.R.O. and this is considered proper. It would be very difficult for one person to do a detailed analysis of work done by another.

One final point: there does appear to be an optimum period in the matter of mist netting in one area. During migrations etc., where there is a flow of birds through an area, netting could be carried out daily. Where the area under review is one in which a fairly large population of birds is resident it is considered unwise to disturb the area by netting too frequently. Little notice appears to be taken of nets which are in position for say half a day at a time. It would appear however from the somewhat limited experience so far available that it would be undesirable to net resident birds more frequently than once in about three weeks. Many banders would therefore be able to conduct this form of survey in more than one area.

NOTE: Warren Hitchcock has informed us that the species and numbers of birds caught by mist net during the last two banding years have been as follows :

1960-61	165 species	5,560 individuals banded
1961-62	192 species	14,235 " "

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

Some of the letters we receive contain passages which are much too interesting to keep to ourselves. The following is an extract from a letter written to our Secretary last October by Derek Stone: Derek was then teaching at "Timbertop", a unit of Geelong Grammar School maintained near Mansfield, Victoria.

"I enclose also a back copy of the magazine put out by this branch of the Geelong school in order that you may appreciate what we are trying to do with the 135 fifteen year old boys who spend one complete school year here. 'Timbertop' is 200 miles N.E. of Geelong.

"You will notice that R.G.A. Clarke who recently became one of your Junior Members is our first Banding 'convert'. He spends his week-ends netting, and is preparing a statistical analysis, and summary, of his observations on the Pied Currawong, for presentation in next year's Science Talent Quest.

"Inspired by D.J. Wimbush, we have trapped 210 Strepera graculina so far during this our first year banding. In addition to compiling statistics of measurements, we are able to observe the Currawong's breeding, and altitudinal migration between Mansfield-1,000', the school-2,000' and Mt. Buller-5,500'. At this moment K.G. Griffiths, the trained biologist, on the teaching staff - also a CSIRO bander - is graphing the correlation between the max. and min. temp. recordings of the cold snaps of October southerly weather, and the re-appearance in numbers of the Currawongs, who by now normally have gone up into the mountains for the summer.

"As well as the above, and Clarke's varied catch of smaller birds with the three mist nets, other boys bait-up and service the Crow Trap built in May by Ian Rowley near the rubbish tip in the bush behind the school.

"Colour banding of the stationary population of Black-backed and White-backed (and mixed) Magpies is done intermittently."

Further in his letter Derek Stone tells us that he is leaving 'Timbertop' and going to Tasmania. However, it is hoped that banding work at 'Timbertop' will continue, and we hope to hear from them again. It seems an ideal place for such activity.

Our Secretary received another interesting letter, from Jack Walsh at Mittagong. He has also been banding Currawongs, among other things.

"There is one point of interest which may or may not be useful. I use drop traps around my garden, a notched stick which when the bird alights on it the lid drops. You know the type of course. What I do is to cover the lid with polythene, and then if it is raining the bird trapped is usually dry when taken out and has no trouble flying after being banded.

"In closing, one rather amusing incident: one of my large drop traps which I keep in the paddock has the sides covered with wooden slats and a polythene covered lid, therefore, it is quite safe to leave it open at night in the hope of trapping nocturnal raptors. Once the lid is closed it is impossible for predators to get at the contents of the trap.

A couple of nights ago I set the trap with the usual mixture of bait -sweetened bread, raisins etc., and for good measure I threw in some fresh mincemeat in the hope that it might attract some form or other of raptone. The next morning I noticed one lid closed. I raced down to the trap with visions of anything from Boobook to Powerful Owl. On arriving at the trap, the contents, one full grown female Brush-tailed Possum with a half grown young one still on it's back. Needless to say a few scratches were collected getting them back to the nearest large tree.

"I have had quite a good success this past few months with Pied Currawongs, about a couple of hundred, should with a bit of luck get some recoveries."

MIST NET NEWS

S.J.Wilson, Canberra.

The standard mist net now being supplied to banders through the Central Bird-banding Association is considered to be the best on the market. However, there is no such thing as a perfect net and improvements are still being made.

A heavier shelf string will be included in future shipments of 20' x 9' and 30' x 9' nets as a few banders remarked on broken strings.

Another problem that is being overcome is the tendency to slight tearing at the ends, at the point where the vertical and horizontal strings meet. To overcome this the vertical thread will be inserted through the 2nd mesh from the end instead of through the end mesh. A heavier vertical outer thread was suggested but this cannot be done because of the method of manufacture.

A recent experiment by the British Trust for Ornithology is to "tether" the nets by means of a tie thread along the top of the net. This will have the effect, it is hoped, of preventing the moving of the slack to one end of the net in wind and should make it possible to net on windy days - days on which the mist netter is usually forced to pack up.

A small shipment of "tethered" nets is on the way from England in 30' x 9' and 40' x 9' sizes and banders who would like to try these should apply to the Association (2 Scott Street, Narrabundah, A.C.T.). These nets are a few shillings